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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Lake County's Comprehensive Plan is a policy document designed to guide growth and development, protect natural resources, and ensure the provision of infrastructure and services to maintain a high quality of life for the people of Lake County through the year 2025. A Comprehensive Plan is the result of a review of the physical characteristics of an area and an evaluation of conditions leading to the establishment of goals, objectives and policies.

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The guiding philosophy of a Comprehensive Plan is to organize and coordinate a community's vision and priorities. The Plan also establishes strategies that are intended to balance the complex relationships between land uses, transportation, public facilities, infrastructure, and the environment.

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Comprehensive Plans in Florida form the foundation for local planning. This Comprehensive Plan was developed in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes and Chapter 125, Florida Statutes. These Statutes establish the requirements and authority for local government comprehensive planning. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) reviews all local comprehensive plans. The minimum criteria with which the DCA reviews these plans are located in Chapter 9J-5 of the Florida Administrative Code. Chapter 9J-5 established the requirements for consistency between local plans with state and regional planning efforts, as well as the minimum criteria for plan elements and the basic format of the plan with regards to data requirements, data analysis and requirements for the Goals, Objectives and Policies.

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New on the planning horizon is the passage of SB 360 in 2005. This newest growth management bill encourages local governments to develop a community vision that provides for sustainable growth, recognizes its fiscal constraints, and protects its natural resources. Lake County had a well-established framework within which to work to develop a plan that was inclusive of the community, internally consistent, forward thinking and compliant with all state standards and statutes.

Planning Horizon 2025 – Lake County's Vision for 2025

Planning Horizon 2025 articulates the ultimate goals of efficient transportation, adequate employment, affordable housing, needed capital improvements, protection of the environment, and access to clean air, water and open space for the next 20 years. These goals were developed through a combination of:

Technical Analyses – Staff analyzed census data, demographic and economic trends and land use information to assess the needs and demand for public utilities, development, conservation and transportation.

Public Involvement – Staff created a uniquely comprehensive process for soliciting public feedback and participation. Two tours of public workshops, an organized series of Local

THE VISION

Protect Community Character and
Quality of Life

Ensure an Efficient, Balanced
Transportation System

Plan for a Viable, Diverse Employment
Base

Provide Affordable Housing Options

Plan for Fiscally Responsible Capital
Improvements

Protect Natural Resources and the
Environment

Protect Clean Air, Water and Open
Space

...For the next 20 years.

Planning Agency meetings and workshops, a community survey, a website and blog, and a knowledgeable staff of planners were on call to the public to take comments, answer questions and ensure an effective, transparent process. Goals, Objectives and Policies

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Planning Horizon 2025 contains ten chapters. Each chapter contains a series of goals, objectives and policies. The individual elements contain measurable objectives and action-oriented policies that seek to move each goal forward. The goals are summarized in the sections below.

Future Land Use – The goal of the Future Land Use Element is for the character, type, and location of land

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal – The long-term end toward which specific programs or activities are ultimately directed.

Objective – A specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress towards a goal.

Policy – The manner in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve an identified goal.

uses to provide for orderly and responsible growth; discourage urban sprawl; promote conservation of natural and cultural resources; provide public facilities and services concurrent with the impacts from new development; maximize economic benefits for existing and future citizens; comply with adopted minimum levels of service standards; and minimize detrimental impacts to health, safety and welfare that are caused by environmental degradation, nuisances and incompatible land uses.

Conservation – The goal of the Conservation Element is to establish objectives and policies that will assist the County to preserve, properly manage and, where possible, enhance the quantity, quality and function of its natural resources and natural environment for existing and future generations.

Recreation – The goal of the Recreation Element is for Lake County to promote the development and management of parks and facilities for a recreation system that includes environmental lands, trails, and other passive and active recreational opportunities that meets the diverse needs of a growing community, as well as guide the acquisition, protection and management of lands for the development of parks, open space and the development of recreation opportunities.

Housing – The goal of the Housing element is for Lake County to adopt standards, plans and principles and participate in partnerships that will provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for all current and anticipated future residents regardless of income.

Deleted: It addition, it is intended that Lake County will ensure the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary housing that is affordable to all current and future very low, low, and moderate income residents.

Transportation – The goals of the Transportation element is for Lake County to facilitate a balanced multi-modal transportation system that encourages increased mobility options, and provides for efficient transportation alternatives while minimizing environmental impacts. It is intended that the County to create a safe, accessible, convenient, and efficient transportation system for residents, employees and visitors, in coordination with the needs of land use activities, population densities, and housing and employment patterns. It is also intended that the County promote coordination among government agencies, Lake Sumter MPO, public and private entities in order to encourage regional system-wide transportation solutions and to develop a financially feasible multi-modal transportation plan that meets the future needs of Lake County.

Concurrency Management – The goal of the Concurrency Management Element is for the County to ensure that adequate public facilities and services are available concurrent with the impacts of development.

Public Facilities – The Public Facilities Element contains six sub-elements: Environmental Lands, Potable Water, Sanitary Sewer, Solid Waste, Aquifer Recharge and Stormwater. The goals of these sub-elements are described below.

Environmental Lands – The Environmental Lands Sub-Element stipulates that Lake County shall protect groundwater and surface water resources within the Wekiva Study Area, including but not limited to springs, springsheds, karst features, and surficial and Floridan aquifers.

Potable Water – The Potable Water Sub-Element requires the County to coordinate the adequate production, treatment and distribution of potable water in a cost effective manner balancing the needs of growth, environment and public health, safety and welfare.

Stormwater – The Stormwater Element states that the County shall provide sound stormwater management to prevent flood damage and protect water quality to ensure the safety and well being of the citizens of Lake County, as well as to protect the quantity and quality of surface waters and groundwater resources such as springsheds.

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Solid Waste – The goal of the Solid Waste Sub-Element is for Lake County to provide for an integrated solid waste management system that protects the public health, sanitation, and environment and provides for operational efficiency and beneficial land use and growth patterns.

Aquifer Recharge – The goal of the Aquifer Recharge Sub-Element is to maintain an adequate quality and quantity of aquifer recharge to protect potable water supplies, and ensure the protection of natural systems, including but not limited to springsheds.

Sanitary Sewer – The goal of the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element is to provide for the adequate disposition of wastewater and by-products in a cost effective manner balancing the needs of growth, environment and public health, safety and welfare.

Capital Improvements – The goals of the Capital Improvements Element is to ensure that Lake County will provide needed public facilities within the County's designated service areas in a manner that protects investments in and maximizes use of existing facilities, maintains adopted level of service standards, promotes a balanced government budget and sound use of public money. In addition, the Element stipulates that the County shall plan for and manage the provision of public facilities and services within a balanced budget that reflects the sound use of public funds in a responsible manner.

Intergovernmental Coordination – The goal of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element is for the County to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of all governmental services and programs by fostering intergovernmental coordination between the county; its municipalities; Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization; adjacent local governments; public and quasi-public agencies; and regional, state and federal governments.

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Economic – The goal of the Economic Element is for Lake County to create an economic environment that will enhance the prosperity and quality of life for all of its citizens, as well as promote balanced and orderly economic prosperity that will provide increased economic opportunity while reducing dependence on any one employment sector.

Lake County's Planning Process

Through this Comprehensive Planning process, Lake County has a unique opportunity to redefine it's future by reevaluating growth and development trends and redefining its vision and priorities. Lake County's first Comprehensive Plan was developed in 1991. This Plan led the County through a time of agricultural

conversion to neighborhoods and commercial corridors. The County's Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) was produced in 2000. The purpose of the EAR was to determine the progress of the Comprehensive Plan and produce a series of EAR-based amendments. Though these amendments were developed, they were never adopted, leaving the County in a state of non-compliance with DCA. In 2004, Lake County began a new process of leading the community through a highly participatory planning process intended to establish a new Comprehensive Plan for submittal to the DCA. This new process allowed the County to start from scratch, and craft a truly modern, relevant plan that reflects the vision and priorities of Lake County and its residents.

Evaluation and Appraisal Report

The next step in Lake County's planning process is to conduct an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) in August 2008. This is a very quick turnaround for Lake County to conduct this review, which is typically required every seven years. However, there is a distinct advantage in having this quick turnaround time in that the County will have an opportunity to make any necessary changes or adjustments in a short time frame. The EAR evaluates how successful a community has been in addressing major community land use planning issues through implementation of its comprehensive plan. Based on this evaluation, the EAR suggests how the plan should be revised to better address community objectives, changing conditions affecting the community, and changes in state requirements.

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